

Explanatory Notes for the 1999-2000 Academic Performance Index (API) Growth Report



These *Explanatory Notes* are designed to assist educators and other interested parties in interpreting the *1999-2000 Academic Performance Index (API) Growth Report*. The *Explanatory Notes* provide details with respect to Academic Performance Index (API) calculations, growth target calculations, and growth calculations. The Notes also explain the criteria that were applied to determine whether or not schools met their growth targets and whether or not they were eligible for the staff and school awards programs.

The Public Schools Accountability Act

The API is the centerpiece of the statewide accountability system in California public education. The Public Schools Accountability Act (PSAA) of 1999 (Chapter 3, Statutes of 1999), requires that the California Department of Education (CDE) annually calculate APIs for California public schools, including charter schools, and publish school rankings based on these indices. The PSAA also requires the establishment of a minimum five-percent annual API growth target for each school as well as an overall statewide API performance target for all schools. A school that meets either API growth or performance targets may be eligible for awards under the following three programs:

- The Governor's Performance Award Program
- The Certificated Staff Performance Incentive Act
- The Schoolsite Employee Performance Bonus

If a school fails to meet its annual growth target, it may be identified for the Immediate Intervention / Underperforming Schools Program (II/USP).

On November 9, 1999, the State Board of Education (SBE):

- approved a methodology for calculating the 1999 API on a scale of 200 to 1000
- defined the five-percent annual API growth target
- established an interim statewide API performance target of 800

These actions cleared the way for the publication of the *1999 API Report*. This report, which was released in January 2000, included each school's 1999 API, its statewide API rank by type of school (elementary, middle, and high), and API rank when compared to schools with similar background characteristics, as defined by the PSAA and APIs for each numerically significant ethnic and socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroup.

Eventually, the API will incorporate a number of indicators; however, for 1999 the API consisted solely of results from the Stanford 9 norm-referenced assessment that is administered in conjunction with the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program. Other legally-required indicators were unavailable for inclusion

in 1999.

Core Elements

Certain core elements appear throughout the 1999-2000 API Growth Report. They include:

- STAR 2000 Percent Tested
- 2000 API (Growth)
- 1999 API (Base)
- 1999-2000 Growth Target
- 1999-2000 Growth
- Met Growth Target
- Awards Eligible

STAR 2000 Percent Tested

This percentage is calculated by dividing the number of students tested by the number of students enrolled in the first day of testing in the grades. The total enrollment is adjusted by subtracting the number of students in those grades exempted from testing due to Individualized Education Program statement as well as minus the number of students in those grades exempted from testing due to parent/guardian written request.

The number is rounded down to the nearest whole number (e.g., 94.9=94). The STAR 2000 Apportionment Information Report is the source of these data.

Number of Students Included in the API

This is the number of students whose Stanford 9 results are included in the school's API. In determining which test results should be included in the API, the CDE employed the same pupil exclusion rules used in calculating school-level STAR results that appear on the Internet at <http://www.star.gov>.

1. A pupil record was excluded if the test administration accommodation for the pupil was more than one grade out of level (e.g., a sixth grader tested lower than 5th grade or higher than 7th grade).

2. A pupil record was excluded if any of the following four test administration accommodations were marked "yes" for all content areas:
 - a. Braille
 - b. flexible scheduling
 - c. revised test format
 - d. use of aids and/or aides
3. A particular content area of a record was excluded if the percentile rank for that content area is not between 1 and 99.
4. A particular content area of a pupil record was excluded if the test administration accommodation for that content area was marked "yes" for any of the four reasons under #2 above.

In addition, to comply with provisions of the PSAA regarding student mobility, a record is excluded if the pupil first attended the district in the current year as indicated on the STAR answer document.

2000 API (Growth)

The 2000 API (Growth) summarizes a school's performance on the 2000 STAR. It is calculated in exactly the same fashion as the 1999 API (Base). A 2000 API (Growth) is not generated for a school with no 1999 API (Base).

1999 API (Base)

The 1999 API (Base) summarizes a school's performance on the 1999 STAR. It was released in January 2000. The API is on a scale of 200 to 1000. It is based on the performance of individual pupils on STAR content area tests as measured through national percentile rankings (NPRs). In some instances, APIs are also calculated for student subgroups at a school in order to ascertain whether the school meets the "comparable improvement" criterion (see page

6). For details on the calculation of the 1999 API, please consult the document titled *1999 Base Year Academic Performance Index (API)*, which is accessible through the PSAA web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/psaa/api>.

For schools with grade configurations that include both grades 8 and 9, the API for these schools was the average of the APIs for the two grade configuration segments weighted by the number of pupils with valid scores in the two segments. For example, for a K-12 school, the API was the weighted average of the APIs for grades 2-8 and for grades 9-11. This procedure is necessary because the structure of the test varies between grades 2-8 and 9-11.

1999-2000 Growth Target

A school's 1999-2000 growth target was calculated by taking five percent of the distance between a school's 1999 API and the interim statewide performance target of 800. For any school with a 1999 API of 781 to 799, the annual growth target was one point. Any school with an API of 800 or more had to maintain an API of at least 800.

1999-2000 Growth

A school's 1999-2000 growth is calculated by subtracting the school's 1999 API (Base) from its 2000 API (Growth).

Met Growth Target

A school met its growth target if it:

- met its school wide 1999-2000 growth target, **and**
- all numerically significant ethnic and socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroups at the school demonstrated comparable improvement.

Schools meet the comparable improvement target if all numerically significant ethnic/racial and

socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroups meet their API subgroup targets, which in most cases is 80 percent of the schoolwide 1999-2000 API growth target. For a full discussion, see the section on "Subgroups," beginning on page 4.

Awards Eligible

Schools that met the following criteria may be eligible for the Governor's Performance Awards and the Schoolsite Employee Performance Bonus Programs:

- the schools met the schoolwide five percent annual growth target
- all numerically significant ethnic and socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroups at the schools demonstrated comparable improvement
- elementary and middle schools had at least 95 percent participation rates in the 2000 Stanford 9; high schools had at least 90 percent participation rates in the 2000 Stanford 9
- schools with 1999 APIs (Base) at or above 800 made at least a one point gain in their 2000 APIs (Growth)

Structure of the Report

The *1999-2000 API Growth Report* is composed of three parts:

1. *County List of Schools*
2. *District List of Schools*
3. *School Report*

List of Schools

These lists include all schools in a county or a district for which the CDE has calculated a 2000 API (Growth). In the county list, the schools are presented alphabetically by district and by type (elementary, middle, and high); in the district list,

the schools are presented alphabetically by type.

Schools with non-traditional grade configurations, e.g., 7-12, have been placed into the school type that they chose when they were assigned a CDS (County-District-School) code.

The CDE did not calculate APIs for:

- Schools with fewer than 100 pupils with valid Stanford 9 test scores
- County-administered schools
- Community Day schools
- Alternative schools
- Continuation schools
- Independent schools
- Kindergarten only or Kindergarten-Grade 1 schools

By law, these schools will be part of alternative accountability systems.

In addition, a school must test at least 65 percent of students in each Stanford 9 content area in both 1999 and 2000 in order to receive an API growth calculation. This was done to ensure the statistical stability of API growth calculations, which will be used to determine whether schools are eligible for awards or subject to interventions.

School Report

A *School Report* is generated for each school on the *List of Schools*. In addition to the common core elements, the *School Report* includes:

- data on subgroups
- school demographic characteristics

Subgroups

The PSAA defines a “numerically significant ethnic or socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroup” as a subgroup “that constitutes at least 15 percent of a school’s total pupil population and consists of at least 30 pupils.” Also, in light of the sizeable

enrollments at many California schools, the State Board of Education has adopted an additional criterion. If a subgroup defined by ethnicity or socioeconomic disadvantage constitutes at least 100 pupils, i.e., at least 100 pupils with valid STAR scores, that subgroup is “numerically significant” and required to demonstrate comparable improvement, even if it does not constitute 15 percent of the school population. **These numerical criteria (15 percent and 30 pupils, or 100 pupils) will be computed on the basis of the number of pupils with valid Stanford 9 scores for that subgroup.**¹

The school is responsible for demonstrating comparable improvement only for those subgroups that are numerically significant in both 1999 and 2000. Ethnic/racial subgroups include the following:

- African American not Hispanic
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Filipino
- Hispanic or Latino
- Pacific Islander
- White not Hispanic

According to the definition adopted by the SBE, the “socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroup” consists of pupils who meet either one of two criteria:

- 1) Neither of the pupil’s parents has received a high school diploma

¹ **For schools with grade configurations that include both grades 8 and 9:** The subgroup APIs are determined in the same manner as the schoolwide API (see page 3).

OR

- 2) The pupil participates in the free or reduced price lunch program.

A pupil who is a member of the socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroup is also a member of one of the racial/ethnic subgroups. Therefore, it is possible that the total percentage of students in all numerically significant subgroups at a school may exceed 100.

To determine whether or not a numerically significant subgroup demonstrated comparable improvement, it is necessary to compute the 1999 API (Base) and the 2000 API (Growth) for each subgroup. Under the definition adopted by the State Board of Education, “comparable improvement” requires that each numerically significant subgroup must meet or exceed 80 percent of the 1999-2000 schoolwide growth target. The 1999-2000 subgroup target was calculated by first multiplying the schoolwide target by .8 and then rounding the product to the nearest whole number.

There were four minor exceptions to this rule:

1. For subgroups within schools with schoolwide APIs between 781 and 799, i.e., approaching the statewide interim performance target of 800, the annual growth target was one point.
2. Regardless of the schoolwide API, subgroups already at or above 800 had to continue to meet the statewide interim performance target of 800.
3. In schools with 1999 APIs of 800 or more, subgroups with an API of less than 800 had to make growth of at least one point.
4. In instances where 80 percent of the schoolwide target results in a subgroup target that would exceed the distance from the subgroup API to 800, the subgroup target equalled the distance to 800.

School Demographic Characteristics

Along with subgroup data, the *School Report* includes the demographic characteristics on which the school characteristics index for the 2000 API school rankings will be based. The data on which the percentages and rates rest were collected from two sources:

1. October 1999 CBEDS data collection (information on teacher credentials, multi-track year round participation, and class size)
2. 2000 Stanford 9 student answer documents (information on ethnic/racial distribution, parental education level, participation in free or reduced price lunch program, school mobility, English language learners)

Regarding information taken from CBEDS:

- It is possible for one teacher to be in both the fully-credentialed and emergency-credential categories; therefore, the total of the percentages for “Fully credentialed teachers” and “Teachers with emergency credentials” may exceed 100.
- Average class sizes were derived from the enrollment data reported on the Professional Assignment Information Form (PAIF).
- “Core academic courses in departmentalized programs” reflects average class size in the following subject areas: English, Foreign Languages, Math, Science, and Social Science.

Regarding background characteristics derived from the Stanford 9 student answer document:

- School mobility is the percentage of students who first attended the school in the current year, excluding students enrolled in the lowest grade at a school. It is used as a background characteristic only. The criterion for excluding a score from the API calculation is **district**

mobility, i.e., any student who began continuous enrollment in the district during the year tested.

The School Demographic Characteristics that appear on this report will be used in the formation of the new similar schools comparison groups for the 2000 API (Base) Report.

STAR 2000 Participation Information

The School Report also includes the data elements on which the STAR 2000 Percent Tested (see page 2) is based. These elements include:

- Enrollment in grades 2-11 on the first day of Testing
- Number of students excused by IEP statement
- Number of students excused by parent written request
- Number of students tested

Data Discrepancies

If there are discrepancies between the official 1999-2000 API (Growth) printed in the report and your own local estimated APIs, you should first determine that the same set of Stanford 9 test scores were used in both sets of calculations.

One way to verify the number of student test scores used in the official API calculation is to begin by examining the STAR Internet reports.

The exclusion rules (see pages 2-3) have already been applied on these reports. The next step is to apply the district mobility exclusion to these numbers in order to derive the number of student test scores used in the API calculations. At this point, if the number of student test scores match the official number of tests included in the API, grade by grade and for all content areas, then the

API calculation results should match. Background characteristics provided for the school will only be used in the calculations of the 2000 API (Base) similar schools rank.

Contacts

If you have further questions about the API, growth targets, school rankings, or numerically significant subgroups, please contact the Educational Planning and Information Center via e-mail at epic@cde.ca.gov or by phone at (916) 657-2273.